

Saturday Chronicle



WING SUNDAY

Director Honored

Community Theater pays tribute

Sweet Music

Nancy Miller honored for 50 years in
Sycamore United Methodist choir
NEIGHBORS, C1

Info on Museum

Wentown Sycamore attraction
INSIDE TODAY'S CHRONICLE



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John's park step closer

edges
rds

said. "It's time to move forward."

A fire that started in the organ on Feb. 9, 2004, destroyed the church. The congregation decided to build a new church, with larger grounds and building, at the northwest corner of Brickville and Motel roads.

The new church should be about 30,000-square feet, nearly 10,000 feet larger than the previous church, Holtz estimated. The congregation also is looking forward to having its own parking lot.

"We never really had parking before," he said, which was one reason the congregation decided to rebuild elsewhere.

"We're really excited. It's time to move forward."

— John Holtz,
congregation chairman

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The old site, equal to two city lots, was home to the church for nearly 70 years. After its destruction, zoning returned to residential, allowing development of two single-family homes or two duplexes.

When the site's neighbors learned what could become of it, they began seeking help from the community to turn it into a park.

With help from the city, builders and community members, the group recently

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City's outsourcing contract work

tries where workers expect lower wages and fewer benefits.

"I think it's an important first step to keep jobs in this state and in this country," the Chicago Democrat said.

Another of the bill's sponsors, Rep. Harry Osterman, D-Chicago, said the law shows the state has a commitment to fighting outsourcing.

"One bit of leverage we have is that as a state with a large budget, how we spend our money is important," Osterman said.

The law also requires the Department of Central Management Services, which awards state contracts, to collect outsourcing data from companies bidding on the contracts and prepare a report with the outsourcing information for the General Assembly by 2007.

► See CONTRACTS, page A2



Chronicle photo HOLLY LUNDH
Sycamore City Manager Bill Nicklas (left) and Rodney Kyler of Bob Kyler Excavating in Malta navigate through debris littering the first floor of the old Marsh Harvester plant in Sycamore while touring the building with environmental and demolition crews Friday afternoon.

City: Old factory is danger to residents

Sycamore says it's time the old Marsh Harvester plant came down

By Renee Messacar
Staff Writer

SYCAMORE — Rotting boxes, molding furniture, stray cats and toxins fill a South Avenue building where 300 Sycamore residents once worked on top-of-the-line farming machinery for the Marsh Harvester company.

The late-1800s factory building, with its leaking roof, crumbling walls and barrels of toxic materials, is such a hazard that city officials hope to convince the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency that it causes an imminent threat to the area, or that the chemicals stored in the building might leak into the ground.

Although the agency awarded the city a \$119,479 grant in May to clean the former industrial complex, the city might need additional state help. If the IEPA designated the site as an imminent hazard, it would send more money and help for immediate clean-up.

The city, which took control of the building after an owner refused to fix its conditions, is working with contractors to identify and remove toxins and demolish the building, said City Manager Bill Nicklas. With more assistance, the project and hazard would be done quicker.

"It's a process," he said of the clean up which is taking



Chronicle photo HOLLY LUNDH
Sycamore City Manager Bill Nicklas (center) leads a tour for (from left) Kyle Webb of Marlin Environmental Co. in South Elgin, Rodney Kyler of Bob Kyler Excavating of Malta, Glenn Hofer of Independent Environmental Consultants Inc. and Greg Kolb of Rockford Blacktop through the Marsh Harvester plant in Sycamore Friday afternoon.

longer than expected. "Everything has to be tested and requires special handling."

Through the years, other businesses, such as Sycamore Wagon Works, Essex Wire

and Inland Wire & Cable, operated in the building, according to County Historian Phyllis Kelley.

In the 1980s, James DiNicola purchased the building for storage space.

His company stored dangerous chemicals in it, according to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. One employee reportedly dumped foundry sand, which contains chromium, lead, zinc and copper, into the alleyway behind the building.

The IEPA forced Sloan Valve Company of Franklin Park to clean the contaminants in November and December of 1998.

Then, a portion of the building's roof collapsed onto South Avenue in 1999, and the city ordered DiNicola to demolish that portion of the building. The city gave him a \$94,500 loan to fix the problem, but when he defaulted on the loan, the city took him to court and took possession of the building.

The city then gained not only the building but the junk within, such as the rotting boxes of baseball cards, clothing, books, furniture, glass bottles and other items DiNicola had stored in it.

While a South Elgin environmental consulting firm, Marlin Environmental Services, worked to clear the building recently, it discovered two rooms that appear more dangerous than the others, Nicklas said. They have collapsed staircases, gaping holes in the floor, walls that could fall in anytime and

► See FACTORY, page A2

"We're trying to get the EPA to notice this is a whole other realm than we thought."

— Bill Nicklas,
Sycamore city manager

City vows fight to get name on DeKalb Township ballot

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ment to the park group Jan. 30.
He and other city officials
helped negotiate the land swap.

Friends of St. John's Park
raised an additional \$10,000
from community and church
members' private donations.

The final amount it needed
came Thursday, when the
Sycamore Park Board promised
it \$80,000.

Factory...

From page A1

chemicals bubbling out of
warped metal barrels.

He recently gave the IEPA
an update about the project
and the two rooms. Although
it approved demolishing that
section of the building so
workers can remove the bar-
rels inside, it promised no
additional funding or made
any move to upgrade the
building's threat, which offi-
cials discovered might be
worse than originally
thought.

"We're trying to get the
EPA to notice this is in a

"I'm praying the vote goes in
the right direction," he said.

Group organizer Rich
Neubauer said he was thankful
for the community's support.

"We're hopeful," he said. "We
did everything we could do.
Now it is up to the church."

Renee Messacar can be
reached at rmessacar@pulitzer.net.

whole other realm than we
thought," Nicklas said Friday
afternoon while walking exca-
vating crews through the
building.

He called the crews in to
make bids on tearing down
the two rooms' walls and ceil-
ings.

The city is accepting bids
for the project until Friday
and intends to take the bids
before the city council Feb. 21.

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reached at rmessacar@pulitzer.net.

Township...

From page A1

in examining the voter rolls.

The electoral board —
whose composition is deter-
mined by state election law —
is only convened when a can-
didate's petitions are chal-
lenged.

Slingerland said the board
would reconvene at the town-
ship office Monday evening,
when more evidence could be
submitted. Township Attorney
Colleen Cebula said Slinger-
land would then submit his
findings to the board, which
would rule on the case shortly
thereafter.

McCoy said he doesn't plan
to submit any evidence in his
defense, doubts the board will
find in his favor, and therefore
expects to file an appeal to the
board's ruling in the courts.

LaVigne has been township
supervisor since 1989, the last
time she had an opponent for
the position. The office comes

with a four-year term. McCoy
has said he is challenging her
because he feels her office is
not run efficiently and has
pointed to what he sees as an
excessive amount of money
spent on travel and training
for township officials.

LaVigne has shot back that
she stands by "every penny"
the township spends while
alleging that McCoy — who
works part-time for a Plano-
based lending company — is
running simply because he
needs a job.

Contested races in town-
ship government are rare, and
LaVigne is the only one of
eight township positions being
challenged on this April's bal-
lot.

Chris Rickert can be
reached at crickert@pulitzer.net.

which was awarded after competitive
ding, prohibits releasing the informatio.
pricing the lawmakers want. After the
state senators filed a Freedom
Information Act request to get the det
Caremark got a restraining order bar
Hynes from releasing it.

"I'm glad the judge agreed with our o
that the public has a right to know how t
money is being spent," said Hynes, wh
office keeps a record of state contracts,

Contracts...

From page A1

Osterman said requiring
the state to collect outsourcing
data doesn't mean that com-
panies that outsource are
automatically banned from
getting state work.

Illinois State Chamber of
Commerce spokesman Todd
Maisch said businesses are
pleased with the measure
because it doesn't rule out
companies that outsource

from getting
"We're pl
Legislature t
at an emoti
crafted a pie
that employe
he said.

Companies
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DeKalb Cou



Rocco Strahman of Chicago, a senior at Northern
takes advantage of Friday's unseasonably warm we: